[redacted]

The United Nations fight for the

Four Freedoms

The Rights of All Men—Everywhere

The four freedoms of common humanity are as much elements of man's needs as air and sunlight, bread and salt. Deprive him of all these freedoms and he dies—deprive him of a part of them and a part of him withers. Give them to him in full and abundant measure and he will cross the threshold of a new age the greatest age of man

These freedoms are the rights of men of every creed and every race, wherever they live This is their heritage, long withheld We of the United Nations have the power and the men and the will at last to assure man's heritage

The belief in the four freedoms of common humanity—the belief in man, created free, in the image of God—is the crucial difference between ourselves and the enemies we face today. In it lies the absolute unity of our alliance, opposed to the enemies of the evil we hate. Here is our strength, the source and promise of victory

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The Four Freedoms

Beyond the war lies the peace. Both sides have sketched the outlines of the new world toward which they strain. The leaders of the Axis countries have published their design for all to read. They promise a world in which the conquered peoples will live out their lives in the service of their masters.

The United Nations, now engaged in a common cause, have also published their design, and have committed certain common aims to writing. They plan a world in which men stand straight and walk free, free not of all human trouble but free of the fear of despotic power, free to develop as individuals, free to conduct and shape their affairs. Such a world has been more dream than reality, more hope than fact, but it has been the best hope men have had and the one for which they have most consistently shown themselves willing to die.

This free-ness, this liberty, this precious thing men love and mean to save, is the good granite ledge on which the United Nations now propose to raise their new world after victory. The purpose of this pamphlet is to examine and define the essential freedoms.

To talk of war aims, shouting over the din of battle while the planet rocks and vibrates, may seem futile to some. Yet the talk must go on among free peoples. The faith people have in themselves is what the free have to build upon. Such faith is basic to them—man's hot belief in man, a belief which suggests that human beings are capable of ordering their affairs. This is a high compliment paid by man to himself, an evidence or gesture of self-respect, of stature, of dignity, and of worth, an affidavit of individual responsibility.

The freedoms we are fighting for, we who are free: the freedoms for which the men and women in the concentration camps and prisons and in the dark streets of the subjugated countries wait, are four in number.

"The first is freedom of speech and expression—everywhere in the world.

"The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way—everywhere in the world.

"The third is freedom from want—which, translated into world terms, means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants—everywhere in the world.

"The fourth is freedom from fear—which, translated into world terms, means a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thor-

ough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbor—anywhere in the world."[1]

These freedoms are separate, but not independent. Each one relies upon all the others. Each supports the whole, which is liberty. When one is missing, all the others are jeopardized. A person who lives under a tyrant, and has lost freedom of speech, must necessarily be tortured by fear. A person who is in great want is usually also in great fear—fear of even direr want and greater insecurity. A person denied the right to worship in his own way has thereby lost the knack of free speech, for unless he is free to exercise his religious conscience, his privilege of free speech (even though not specifically denied) is meaningless. A person tortured with fears has lost both the privilege of free speech and the strength to supply himself with his needs. Clearly these four freedoms are as closely related, as dependent one upon another, as the four seasons of the natural year, whose winter snows irrigate the spring and whose dead leaves, fermenting, rebuild the soil for summer's yield.

The first two freedoms—freedom of speech and freedom of religion—are cultural. They are prerogatives of the thinking man, of the creative and civilized human being. Sometimes, as in the United States, they are guaranteed by organic law. They are rather clearly understood, and the laws protecting them are continually being revised and adjusted to preserve their basic meaning. Freedom from fear and from want, on the other hand, are not part of our culture but part of our environment—they concern the facts of our lives rather than the thoughts of our minds. Men are unafraid, or well-fed, or both, according to the conditions under which they live.

To be free a man must live in a society which has relieved those curious pressures which conspire to make men slaves: pressure of a despotic government, pressure of intolerance, pressure of want. The declaration of the four freedoms, therefore, is not a promise of a gift which, under certain conditions, the people will receive; it is a declaration of a design which the people themselves may execute.

Freedom, of whatever sort, is relative. Nations united by a common effort to create a better world are obviously not projecting a Utopia in which nobody shall want for anything. That is not the point—nor within the range of human possibility. What unites them is the purpose to create a world in which no one need want for the minimum necessities of an orderly and decent life, for cleanliness, for self respect and security. It is an ambitious design, perhaps too ambitious for the cynic or the faithless, but it is supported by the sure knowledge that the earth produces abundantly and that men are already in possession of the tools which could realize such a purpose if men chose to use them.

[1] Franklin D. Roosevelt to the Seventy-seventh Congress, January 6, 1941.

This, then, is a credo to which the representatives of 28 nations have subscribed—not a promise made by any group of men to any other group. It is only the people themselves who can create the conditions favoring these essential freedoms which they are now repurchasing in the bazaar of war and paying for with their lives. Nothing is for sale at bargain prices, nor will the house be built in three days with cheap labor. From a world in ruins there can rise only a slow, deliberate monument. This time, conceived by so many peoples of united purpose, it will rise straight upward and rest on good support.

Freedom of Speech

To live free a man must speak openly; gag him and he becomes either servile or full of cankers. Free government is then the most realistic kind of government for it not only assumes that a man has something on his mind, but concedes his right to say it. It permits him to talk—not without fear of contradiction, but without fear of punishment.

There can be no people's rule unless there is talk. Men, it turns out, breathe through their minds as well as through their lungs, and there must be a circulation of ideas as well as of air. Since nothing is likely to be more distasteful to a man than the opinion of someone who disagrees with him, it does the race credit that it has so stubbornly defended the principle of free speech. But if a man knows anything at all, he knows that that principle is fundamental in self-government, the whole purpose of which is to reflect and affirm the will of the people.

In America, free speech and a free

press were the first things the minds of the people turned to after the fashioning of the Constitution. Farsighted men, in those early days, readily understood that some sort of protection was necessary. Thus when the first amendment to the Constitution was drawn (part of what the world now knows as the Bill of Rights), it prohibited the Congress from making any law which might abridge the freedom of speech or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the Government for a redress of their grievances.

In the Nazi state, freedom of speech and expression have been discarded—not for temporary military expediency, but as a principle of life. Being contemptuous of the individual, and secretly suspicious of him, the German leader has deprived him of his voice. Ideas are what tyrants most fear. To set up a despotic state, the first step is to get rid of the talkers—the talkers in schools, the talkers in forums, the talkers in political rallies and in trade union meetings, the talkers on the radio and in the newsreels, and in the barber shops and village garages. Talk does not fit the Nazi and the Fascist scheme, where all ideas are, by the very nature of the political structure, the property of one man.

Talk is death to tyranny, for it can easily clarify a political position which the ruler may prefer to befog, and it can expose injustices which he may choose to obscure.

Our Bill of Rights specifically mentioned the press. Today the press is one of many forms of utterance. Talk and ideas flow in ever-increasing torrents, through books, magazines, schools, the radio, the motion picture. The camera has created a whole new language of its own.

All these new forms are safeguarded with the ancient guarantees, but the essential danger of not being allowed to speak freely remains. Today the privilege is challenged more gravely than ever before, in the countries dominated by the Axis books are burned, universities are shut down, men are put to death for listening to a radio broadcast. Hitler's New Order seeks to prove that unity and efficiency are achieved most readily among people who are prevented from reading, thinking, talking, debating. This new anesthesia is a subtle drug. Under its quick influence men sleep a strange sleep.

The right to speak, the right to hear, the right of access to information carry with them certain responsibilities. Certain favorable conditions are necessary before freedom of speech acquires validity.

The first condition is that the individual have something to say. Literacy is a prerequisite of free speech, and gives it point. Denied education, denied information, suppressed or enslaved, people grow sluggish; their opinions are hardly worth the high privilege of release. Similarly, those who live in terror or in destitution, even though no specific control is placed upon their speech, are as good as gagged.

Another condition necessary for free speech is that the people have access to the means of uttering it—to newspapers, to the radio, the public forum. When power or capital are concentrated, when the press is too closely the property of narrow interests, then freedom suffers. There is no freedom, either, unless facts are within reach, unless information is made available. And a final condition of free speech is that there be no penalties attached to the spread of information and to the expression of opinion whether those penalties be applied by the Government or by any private interests whatsoever.

The operation of a free press and the free expression of opinion are far from absolute rights. The laws of libel and slander set limits on what men may say of other men. The exigency of war sets limits on what information may be given out, lest it give aid and comfort to the enemy. Good taste sets limits on all speech.

Freedom of speech, Justice Holmes has warned, does not grant the right to shout fire in a crowded theatre. When ideas become overt acts against peace and order then the Government presumes to interfere with free speech. The burden of proof, however, is upon those who would restrict speech—the danger must be not some vague danger but real and immediate.

We are not so much concerned with these inevitable limitations to free speech as with the delight at the principle in society and how greatly it has strengthened man's spirit, how steadily it has enlarged his culture and his world. We in America know what the privilege is because we have lived with it for a century and a half. Talk founded the Union, nurtured it, and preserved it. The dissenter, the disbeliever, the crack-pot, the reformer, those who would pull down as well as build up—all are free to have their say.

Talk is our daily fare—the white bloomed lecturer regaling the Tuesday Ladies' Club, the prisoner at the bar testifying in his own behalf, the editorial writer complaining of civic abuses, the actor declaiming behind the footlights, the movie star speaking on the screen, the librarian dispensing the accumulated talk of ages, the professor holding forth to his students, the debating society, the meeting of the aldermen, the minister in the pulpit, the traveler in the smoking car, the soap-box orator with his flag and his bundle of epigrams, the opinions of the solemn magistrate and the opinions of the animated mouse—words, ideas, in a never-ending stream, from the enduring wisdom of the great and the good to the puniest thought troubling the feeblest brain. All are listened to, all add up to something and we call it the rule of the people, the people who are free to say the words.

The United States fights to preserve this heritage, which is the very essence of the Four Freedoms. How, unless there is freedom of speech, can freedom of religion or freedom from want or freedom from fear be realized? The enemies of

all liberty flourish and grow strong in the dark of enforced silence.

For the right to be articulate the inarticulate airman climbs to his fabulous battleground. For this fight the grim-lipped soldier; the close mouthed sailor, the marine.

Freedom of Religion

That part of man which is called the spirit and which belongs only to himself and to his God, is of the very first concern in designing a free world. It was not their stomachs but their immortal souls which brought the first settlers to America's shores, and they prayed before they ate. Freedom of conscience, the right to worship God, is part of our soil and of the sky above this continent.

Freedom of worship implies that the individual has a source of moral values which transcends the immediate necessities of the community, however important these may be. It is one thing to pay taxes to the state—this men will do, it is another to submit their consciences to the state—this they politely decline. The wise community respects this mysterious quality in the individual, and makes its plans accordingly.

The democratic guarantee of freedom of worship is not in the nature of a grant—it is in the nature of an admission. It is the state admitting that the spirit soars in illimitable regions beyond the collectors of customs. It was Tom Paine, one of the great voices of freedom in early America, who pointed out that a government could no more grant to man the liberty to worship God than it could grant to God the liberty of receiving such worship.

The miracle which democracy has achieved is that while practicing many kinds of worship, we nevertheless achieve social unity and peace. And so we have the impressive spectacle, which is with us always here in America, of men attending many different churches, but the same town meeting, the same political forum.

Opposed to this democratic conception of man and of the human spirit is the totalitarian conception. The Axis powers pretend that they own all of a man, including his conscience. It was inevitable that the Nazis should try to deny the Christian church, because in virtually every respect its teachings are in opposition to the Nazi ideal of race supremacy and of the subordination of the individual. Christianity could only be an annoyance and a threat to Hitler's bid for power and his contempt for the common man.

Today the struggle of Man's spirit is against new and curious shackles. Today a new monstrosity has shown itself on earth, a seven days' wonder, a new child of tyranny—a political religion in which the leader of the state becomes, himself, an object of worship and reverence and in which the individual becomes a corpuscle in the blood of the community, almost without identity. This Nazi freak must fail, if only because men are not

clods, because the spirit does live. In the design for a new and better world, religious freedom is a fundamental prop

We of the nations united in war, among whom all the great religions are represented, see a triumphant peace by which all races will continue the belief in man, the belief in his elusive and untouchable spirit, and in the solid worth of human life

Freedom From Want

The proposal that want be abolished from this world would be pretentious, or even ridiculous, were it not for two important recent discoveries

One is the discovery that, beyond any doubt, men now possess the technical ability to produce in great abundance the necessities of daily life—enough for everyone. This is a revolutionary and quite unprecedented condition on earth, which stimulates the imagination and quickens the blood.

Another is the discovery (or rather the realization) that the earth is one planet indivisible—that one man's hunger is every other man's hunger. We know now that the world must be looked at whole if men are to enjoy the fruits they are now able to produce, and if the inhabitants of the globe are to survive and prosper.

Freedom from want, everywhere in the world, is within the grasp of men. It has never been quite within their grasp before. Prosperous times have been enjoyed in certain regions of the world at certain periods in history, but local prosperity was usually achieved at the expense of some other region, which was

being impoverished, and the spectre of impending war hung over all. Now, the industrial changes of the last 150 years and the new prospect implicit in the words "United Nations" have given meaning to the phrase "freedom from want" and rendered it not only possible but necessary.

It was in the year 1492 that the earth became round in the minds of men—although it had been privately globular for many centuries. Now in the year 1942, by a coincidence which should fortify astrologers, the earth's rotundity again opens new vistas, this time not of fabulous continents ready to be ransacked, but of a fabulous world ready to be unified and restored. War having achieved totality, against men's wishes but with their full participation, our great resolve as we go to battle must now be that the peace shall be total also. The world is all one today. No military gesture anywhere on earth, however trivial, has been without consequence everywhere, and what is true of the military is true, also, of the economic. A hungry man in Cambodia is a threat to the well-fed of Duluth.

People are worried about the period which will follow this war. Some fear the peace more than they fear the war. But the picture is neither hopeless nor is it black. Already, in this country and abroad, agencies are at work making preliminary studies and designing machinery to stabilize the peacetime world which will follow the war. They are preparing to reemploy the returning soldier, to maintain buying power at a high level, to stand behind industry while it is changing back to peaceable products, to guarantee a certain security to the groups which need such guarantees. The fact that these plans are being drawn is itself encouraging, for when trouble is anticipated and fairly faced, it is less likely to ensue.

The tools of production and the skills which men possess are tremendous in the present war emergency, and when the peace comes, the world will contain more skilled people than ever before in history. Those who are at work planning broadly for a better human society propose to equip this enormous productive manpower with new ideas to fit new conditions.

The pattern is already beginning to become apparent. Once, the soil was regarded as something to use and get the most from and then abandon. Now it is something to conserve and replenish. Once it was enough that a man compete freely in business, for the greatest possible personal gain; now his enterprise, still free, must meet social standards and must not tend toward concentration of power unfavorable to the general well-being of the community. Once, an idle man was presumed to be a loafer, now it is realized he may be a victim of circumstances in which all share, and for which all are responsible.

The great civilizations of the past were never free from wide-spread poverty. Very few of them, and these only during short periods, produced enough wealth to make possible a decent living standard for

all their members, even if that wealth had been equally divided. In the short space of a few decades we have changed scarcity to abundance and are now engaged in the experiment of trying to live with our new and as yet unmanageable riches. The problem becomes one not of production but of distribution and of consumption; and since buying power must be earned, freedom from want becomes freedom from mass unemployment, plus freedom from penury for those individuals unable to work.

In our United States the Federal Government, being the common meeting ground of all interests and the final agency of the people, assumes a certain responsibility for the solution of economic problems. This is not a new role for the Government, which has been engaged since the earliest days of our history in devising laws and machinery and techniques for promoting the well-being of the citizen, whether he was a soldier returning from a war, or a new settler heading west to seek his fortune, or a manufacturer looking for a market for his goods, or a farmer puzzled over a problem in animal husbandry.

The beginning has been made. The right to work. The right to fair pay. The right to adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care. The right to security. The right to live in an atmosphere of free enterprise. We state these things as "rights"—not because man has any natural right to be nourished and sheltered, not because the world owes any man a living, but because unless man succeeds in filling these primary needs his

only development is backward and downward, his only growth malignant, and his last resource war.

All of these opportunities are not in the American record yet, and they are not yet in the world's portfolio in the shape of blueprints. Much of America and most of the world are not properly fed, clothed, housed. But there has never been a time, since the world began, when the hope of providing the essentials of life to every living man and woman and child has been so good, or when the necessity has been so great.

It can be done. The wealth exists in the earth, the power exists in the hills, men have the tools and the training. What remains to be seen is whether they have the wit and the moral character to work together and to lay aside their personal greed.

We and our allies are fighting today not merely to defend an honorable past and old slogans and faiths, but to construct a still more honorable and rewarding future. Fighting men, coming back from the war, will not be satisfied with a mere guarantee of dull security—they will expect to find useful work and a vigorous life. Already moves are being made to meet this inescapable challenge.

The first step, obviously, will be to prevent the sort of slump which has usually followed a great war. War is tremendously costly, in terms of money. Billions are being spent in order that we may win. The peace, too, will be costly, and nothing is gained by evading the fact. But a democracy which can organize itself to defeat one sort of enemy is capable of sustaining the effort through the days that follow. Work, in vast quantity and in infinite variety, will be waiting to be done. We will have the capacity to produce the highest national income ever known, and the jobs to keep men at work.

Freedom from want is neither a conjurer's trick nor a madman's dream. The earth has never known it, nor anything approaching it. But free men do not accept the defeatist notion that it never will. The freeing of all people from want is a continuing experiment, the oldest and most absorbing one in the laboratory, the one that has produced the strangest gases and the loudest explosions. It is a people's own experiment and goes on through the courtesy of chemists and physicists and poets and technicians and men of strong faith and unshakable resolve.

Freedom From Fear

Fear is the inheritance of every animal, and man is no exception. Our children fear the tangible dark, and we give them what reassurance we can, so that they will grow and develop normally, their minds free from imaginary terrors. This reassurance, this sense of protection and security, is an important factor in their lives.

The new dark which has settled on the earth with the coming of might and force and evil has terrified grown men and

women. They fear the dark, fear fire and the sword; they are tormented by the dread of evils which are only too real. They fear the conqueror who places his shackles on the mind. Above all else they are tortured by that basic political fear: fear of domination of themselves by others—others who are stronger, others who are advancing, others who have the weapons and are destroying and burning and pillaging. This is the fear which haunts millions of men and women everywhere in the world. It is the fear of being awakened in the night, with the rapping on the door.

No structure of peace, no design for a good world, will have any solidity or strength or even any meaning unless it disperses the shadow of this fear and brings reassurance to men and women, not only for themselves but for their children and their children's children. Aggressive war, sudden armed attack, secret police, these must be forever circumvented. The use of force, historically the means of settling disputes, must be made less and less feasible on earth, until it finally becomes impossible. Even though the underlying causes which foment wars may not be immediately eradicated from the earth, the physical act of war can be prevented when people, by their ingenuity, their intelligence, their memory, and their moral nature, choose to do so. Force can be eliminated as a means of political action only if it be opposed with an equal or greater force—which is economic and moral and which is backed by collective police power, so that in a community of nations no one nation or group of nations will have the opportunity to commit acts of aggression against any neighbor, anywhere in the world.

The machinery for enforcing peace is important and indispensable; but even more important is that there be established a moral situation, which will support and operate this machinery. As the last war ended, an attempt was made to construct an orderly world society capable of self-control. It was an idealistic and revolutionary plan. But like the first automobile, it moved haltingly and was more of a novelty than a success. For a while men's hopes focused on the plan; but it was never universally accepted. The faith was not there, nor the courage.

Today many nations are working together with unbelievable energy and with harmony of feeling and interest. They are united at the moment by the desire to win battles, but they are also united by common principles and by a conviction that their people ultimately want the same thing from life—freedom, peace, security, the chance to live as individuals.

Such collaboration has its origin in the democratic spirit, which infects men regardless of latitude or longitude, and it has been fed by the close association between nations which are geographically near neighbors—as, for example, the inter-American powers. Canada has been a good neighbor to the United States for many years, and the Canadian border, never fortified, stands today as a symbol

of what the world will be when men's faith becomes great enough and their heads become hard enough.

Still another answer to fear is found in the concept of the United Nations. For the first time in history, twenty eight nations have been acting together, in the very midst of a mortal struggle, to set down the specifications of a peace settlement and the aims of war and post war action. Their representatives, meeting in Washington on New Year's Day, 1942, signed a historic Declaration by United Nations, saying:

"The Governments signatory hereto,

"Having subscribed to a common program of purposes and principles embodied in the Joint Declaration of the President of the United States of America and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland dated August 14, 1941, known as the Atlantic Charter,

"Being convinced that complete victory over their enemies is essential to defend life, liberty, independence and religious freedom, and to preserve human rights and justice in their own lands as well as in other lands, and that they are now engaged in a common struggle against savage and brutal forces seeking to subjugate the world,

DECLARE:

(1) Each Government pledges itself to employ its full resources, military or economic, against those members of the Tripartite Pact and its adherents with which such government is at war.

"(2) Each Government pledges itself to cooperate with the Governments signatory hereto and not to make a separate armistice or peace with the enemies.

"The foregoing declaration may be adhered to by other nations which are or which may be, rendering material assistance and contributions in the struggle for victory over Hitlerism."

The nations signing the Declaration by United Nations are: The United King-

dom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, China, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Costa Rica, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, India, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Poland, South Africa, Yugoslavia, and the United States of America. On June 14, Mexico and the Philippine Islands adhered to the Declaration by United Nations.

Can anyone be deaf to the sound of hope in this assemblage? Men have not achieved their goal, but at least they have collectively aspired to it, and have accepted a responsibility for it which is continuing and not merely fitful. The work is to go on. The new building will indeed be built, whatever its shape, whatever its appointments, whatever its defects

Those are the goals of the peace and the hope of the world But the specific and immediate problem, the first move to free people from fear, is to achieve a peaceable world which has been deprived of its power to destroy itself This can only be accomplished by disarming the aggressors and keeping them disarmed. Last time they were disarmed, but they were not prevented from rearming This time they will be disarmed in truth

* * *

It will be remembered that the inquisitive Ben Franklin, testing the lightning with his kite, found in the storm's noisy violence the glimmerings of a secret which later illuminated the world. His example suggests that good news is sometimes hidden in bad weather. Today, in the storm which rages across the whole earth, men are sending up their kites to the new lightning, to try its possibilities and to prepare for clearing skies.

The Four Freedoms guide them on Freedom of speech and religion, freedom from want and from fear—these belong to all the earth and to all men everywhere. Our own country, with its ideas of equality, is an experiment which has been conducted against odds and with much patience and, best of all, with some success for most people. It has prospered and brought fresh hope to millions and new good to humanity. Even in the thick of war the experiment goes ahead with old values and new forms. Life is change The earth shrinks in upon itself and we adjust to a world in motion, holding fast to the truth as we know it, confident that as long as the love of freedom shows in the eyes of men, it will show also in their deeds.

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